



Free to Be...You and Me (The Original Classic Edition)

Marlo Thomas

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This is the book we all know and love by Marlo Thomas and her friends-brought to new life with brand new illustrations to captivate and inspire a new generation of readers on a journey of the heart. Whether you are opening *Free to Be . . . You and Me* for the first time or the one hundredth time you will be engaged and transformed by this newly beautifully illustrated compilation of inspirational stories, songs, and poems. The sentiments of thirty-five years ago are as relevant today as when this book was published. Celebrating individuality and challenging stereotypes empowers both children and adults with the freedom to be who they want to be and to have compassion and empathy for others who may be different. Working closely with Marlo and co-creator Carole Hart, Peter H. Reynolds, the *New York Times* Best Selling Children's Book Author/Illustrator, conjured his whimsical drawings throughout the book bringing a new sense of unity and warmth to the pages. You will find yourself *marveling* at the illustrations, nodding in agreement with the stories and poems, and *singing* the words to all the classic songs! It is wonderful that the thoughts, ideas, and emotions the creators envisioned so many years ago can still have a magical effect on children today.

Free to Be...You and Me (The Original Classic Edition) Details

Date : Published July 11th 2002 by Running Press Adult (first published June 1974)

ISBN : 9780762413065

Author : Marlo Thomas

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Becky Bass says

This book explores several different cultures and gender roles. The book's main idea is gender neutrality, and every gender role can face the same obstacle with a different result. Be free to be whoever and do whatever you want. The book was first written in the 1970's and includes several poems. It teaches children to celebrate loving their own skin and the individuality that each of them have. It has several songs attached to the book that would be good when reading or using the book in a classroom setting. The author doesn't explain the different experienced the children faced in attachment to their race, but he also includes the race of each set of children. This brings a neutrality to the table showing that regardless of who you are, there can be equality in every situation.

Megan Mulder says

Several different groupings of children are heard within the pages of this book - the author is able to find a story within the pages that will fit either the child they are teaching or the child they once were. The stories do not focus on the color of the character's skin, although the authors do not hide it either; instead, stories are told in a very entertaining fashion from feelings and societal experiences to divorce and gender equality. All of the cooperating authors provide something for everyone within this book's pages, and even though I read this as a child, I got so much more out of it now as an adult.

Within the special 35th anniversary edition, the pictures practically jump off the page - I highly recommend purchasing for a classroom or even as a new parent gift!

Sarah Sammis says

I'm as old as Free to Be... You and Me by Marlo Thomas (and friends). The book, record and TV special were some of the inescapable things in my childhood (no matter how hard I tried!) and now the book is back and it landed (uninvited) on my doorstep for review.

As Ms. Thomas explains in the beginning of the book she was inspired to create Free to Be... You and Me when her niece complained about all the books having princesses who need to be rescued. My response would have been: you're reading the wrong the books! What about Alice, Ozma, Dorothy, Anne, Trixie, Nancy, Madeline, Wendy and Mary to name just a few of the many literary heroines from my youth who didn't need princes or rescuing.

Free to Be... You and Me isn't though just trying to be a book to empower young women, it also tries to give boys permission to like things considered "girlie" (dolls and pink and showing emotions). As I pointed out in The Boy Who Wanted to be a Fish by Le Grand, pink for girls is a relatively new thing. A better way of conveying a message (whatever it is) is to show not tell. For boys who like pink, I recommend Pinkalicious and Purplicious for the younger brother in the book who is almost as nuts about pink as his big sister.

The big message of this book is basically this: don't be afraid to do your own thing. Unfortunately the book comes with the conceit that children don't have the will power to think for themselves or push boundaries. That's not been the case with most of the children I've met through my own two.

This reissue comes with sheet music and a CD. The original cartoons are on YouTube if you're inclined to watch them.

Maria says

Quite simply, *the* classic 1970's children's book. Mention this book at a party with your contemporaries and separate the cool kids from the dreck. ;-)

Sarah says

Although this is a collection of poems and short stories, I have included it in my "poetry" selections. I loved listening to record and cassette tape recordings of the original version of this book as a child. This is actually the 35th anniversary edition, which I rediscovered recently at the library. As I pour over this new version, I can hear all of the songs, stories and poems in my head read by the likes of Alan Alda, Marlo Thomas, Mel Brooks, Carol Channing, and other big names. This book is a celebration of the individuality of children, who they may be and who they could be. It is sometimes silly and sometimes serious, but often thought-provoking and clever. This book can be enjoyed either by just reading it or reading along with the accompanying CD. It can be enjoyed alone, with a friend, curled up with a family member. Many of the poems, stories, and songs can be used individually with a classroom unit or as part of a music program. I hope that others get as much pleasure as I did (and do) experiencing this wonderful book!

Katherine Coble says

This book was given to me by a friend of the family. It will always stand in my mind as one of the weirdest story collections I've ever read. Some of the stories were poignant, some disturbing, some comforting. A couple tried too hard to bang you over the head with their Differentness. But if a book is a time capsule, this is the best possible window into the late 60s and early 70s, into the hard work of busting gender stereotypes and using fiction to nurture a new generation with a stronger mindset of accepting differences in people.

Dottie says

This one came across my radar when my girls were small and became a favorite with them and also with me. Clever and thought provoking and grounded in good common sense approaches to growing good character.

Of course the edition we had was the original one in the 1970's or 1980's? but this is the same cover. We also had the recording -- you know, those big 33 1/3 RPM vinyl things in a nice cardboard sleeve that looked just like the book cover here. I can still sing along in my head at times -- that's how often it was played.

Taylor Kundel-Gower says

Originally, this book (and other associated materials) was way before my time, but it has survived and become a classic. I was very excited to read it and I am mostly impressed with it. It contains a lot of good anti-patriarchal messages (female empowerment, males having dolls and feelings) that are still very relevant and I LOVE the folksy songs. However, it is a little dated and sure seems to love the gender binary.

Cara Byrne says

Updated with fresh illustrations and more recent pictures, this book keeps many of the most famous songs and stories from the original *Free to Be... You and Me* with a new introduction by Thomas and an end statement by Gloria Steinem. Thomas states that she wrote the book for her niece because she did not find dynamic or empowering books on her shelf. She states: "But what I was most shocked to see was that all of the books talked about what girls and boys should be, instead of what they could be. That's never a good thing. 'Should' is a small and bossy word. 'Could' is as big and beautiful as the sky." My favorite stories include Joyce Johnson's "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe," Lucille Clifton's "Three Wishes," and Miles' "Atalanta." While this new version encourages the child reader to engage with the work, writing on the pages and marking the stories s/he likes, it omits some of the drawings and writing by children present in the 1974 edition.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Jaglvr for Kids @ TeensReadToo.com

I was a young child when *FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME* was first released. My elementary school even used songs from *FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME* for a spring concert. As I reviewed this book now, as an adult, I was still amazed that I could hum the tunes to the songs written as poems in the book.

FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME is one of those rare gems that have managed to stand the test of time. Updated with vibrant new illustrations, *FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME* takes controversial messages (imagine how controversial they would have been in the early 1970s!) and brushes off the impossibilities of what can be.

FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME emphasizes to children the endless possibilities that are available to them. The book encourages children of all ages to do what they want, and not be limited by what society expects of them.

Take the story of "Atalanta." The princess's father automatically expects her to marry the man he chooses for her. Atalanta wants nothing to do with that. She wants to be the creator of her own destiny. She compromises with her father that if she can run the race with the possible suitors, if she loses the race, she will do as he

wishes. But ultimately, Atalanta holds her own fate in her hands by risking running the race against the suitors.

Or, there's "William's Doll." What father doesn't cringe at the thought of his son wanting to play with a doll? But this story shows that by allowing William to have the doll that he desires, he has gained the knowledge to be an awesome big brother.

These are just two of the wonderful parts of **FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME**. With poems, comics, songs, and amazing illustrations, parents will fall in love with the book again, and children will immediately make **FREE TO BE...YOU AND ME** one of those treasures to be read time and again.

And if you are a parent that doesn't remember this from your childhood, pick up a copy and read "Boy Meets Girl." There's no way you can forget the amusing tale of the babies that meet minutes after being born in the nursery!

Kevin Saunders says

This book is great! It emphasizes cultural diversity, encouraging children to simply be themselves and not worry about different skin color or languages. It reaches out to all different learning types as it has collections of stories, songs, and poems to be chosen from. I feel that this could be used during a lesson on culture to show students that they shouldn't be ashamed of who they are. I haven't had a chance to use this book as of yet, but it's definitely on my "to do" list.

Maggie Mullis says

Free to Be You and Me is a collection of short stories that deal with accepting yourself and others.

It has a variety of different types of literature. For example, poems, short stories, and even songs. It is very interactive, and has a lot of interesting topics. One that caught my eye was of a boy and girl corresponding by e-mail discussing whether the girl would be allowed to play on the baseball team. I found it kind of horrifying that this book was written in the 70's yet is still extremely relevant.

Allison D says

This book contains multiple short stories that approach a lot of different stereotypes cultures and genders face. One example is of saying it is okay to cry and there were all genders crying. It is all about gender neutrality and approach many different gender roles in society and says that you can be free to be whoever and whatever you want.

This applies to feminism because it is all about gender roles and trying to bring neutrality to them. It shows that there is nothing that should be specific to women or specific to just men. That is the overall goal of feminism. The goal of feminism is the equality of all genders.

The illustrations in this book are a lot different than most. Their are pictures of real children and pictures of

drawn charters. I think that any child could find interest in this book because of how many different topics it covers and is not gender specific. The genre of this book is nonfiction because it is not a story just excerpts of how you do not need to act a certain way.

Vivian Valvano says

I have loved FREE TO BE ... YOU AND ME since its original publication in 1972. Heather has loved it since Grandma and I introduced her to it when she was a little girl. I bought the 35th anniversary edition last Christmas for my niece's daughter, and I just bought one for Heather (and me). I spent some wonderful time last night reading, remembering, and getting to know the changes made for the anniversary edition - new illustrations by gifted artists using contemporary artistic tools, more wise words from Marlo Thomas, an update by Gloria Steinem on "What Buying This Book Will Do" ... Kudos, forever, to Marlo Thomas and the Free to Be Foundation and the Ms. Foundation for Women and all the contributors, past and present. Absolute favorites: "Ladies First" (I can still hear Heather and Grandma laughing), "Atalanta," and "No One Else."

Aerin says

I had never read this book before today. I always passed it over because of the outdated illustrations (yes, it was first published a mere four years before I was born. Let's move on.) The contents are wonderful, but you'd expect that from contributors like Judy Blume and Shel Silverstein and Judith Viorst. What made me fall in love were the illustrations - oh, the illustrations! The artists of the new illustrations include Henry Cole (*And Tango Makes Three*), Peter H. Reynolds (*Judy Moody series*) and LeUyen Pham (*Big Sister, Little Sister*). They make this volume a book worth having, worth giving, and worth reading over and over.
